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AUTHOR Ehle, Maryann
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ABSTRACT

"Posacculturation" (positive acculturation) is the power of literature to deepen understandings and appreciations of the self and others. In the successful posacculturation process, the facilitator identifies the values, concepts, or behaviors to be acculturated; selects the appropriate literature to meet the reader's needs; and communicates the literary work. The reader crystalizes an awareness of the characters in the work and experiments with various creative expressions such as creative drama, pantomime, role play, puppetry, and creative writing. The best literature for posacculturation revolves around three major themes: (1) becoming of self; (2) developing positive human relationships; and (3) coping with the dynamic, changing world. Among others, works dealing with these themes include "The Pigman" by Paul Zindel, "The Velveteen Rabbit," "The Little Prince," "Jonathon Livingston Seagull," "The Door in the Wall," "Charlotte's Web," "All Kinds of Families," "Harriet the Spy," "The Outsiders," "Nilda," "Across Five Aprils," "Blubber," and "Grapes of Wrath." Studies do confirm that readers are influenced by literature, although the extent of this influence is uncertain. Finally, "Behavior Patterns in Children's Books" and "Reading Ladders for Human Relationships" are two good annotated bibliographies to help the facilitator select appropriate books. (JL)

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THE VELVETEEN RABBIT, THE LITTLE PRINCE, AND FRIENDS: POSACCULTURATION THROUGH LITERATURE

A Paper Presented to a Professional Clinic
Association of Teacher Educators Annual Conference
Phoenix, Arizona
February 13-19, 1982

by: Maryann Ehle

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Literature has been, throughout the ages, one of the most subtle, but powerful, of teachers. From the earliest oral tradition the tacit messages of the storyteller have acculturated humankind's most deeply ingrained concepts. For good or ill, great masses have been strongly influenced by literature. THE BIBLE, THE KORAN, mythology, folktales, Thomas Paine's COMMON SENSE, Harriett Beecher Stowe's UNCLE TOM'S CABIN, Karl Marx's DAS KAPITAL, Adolph Hitler's MEIN KAMPF, positively or negatively, have altered the lives of countless people (LeJeune, 1969)

Not only has literature acculturated group social and political beliefs, it has changed individual feelings, values, and behaviors. Some of that literature is narrow, erroneous, prejudicial. For centuries its subtle acculturation of role stereotypes and discriminating attitudes and actions has complicated the human experience. Some of it acculturates positively, as James Baldwin's words exemplify:

> ".....I was looking in books for a bigger world in which I lived. In some blind and instinctive way I knew what was happening all around me. And I was trying to make a connection between the books and the life I saw and the life I lived.....You think your pain and your heartbreak are unprecedented in the history of the world, but then you read. It was books that taught me that the things that tormented me the most were the very things that connected me with all the people who were alive, or who had ever been alive....." (Baldwin, in Reid, 1972).

Baldwin is describing that literature which provides knowledge of the self and identification with all humanity, which reveals the universal problems of humans everywhere, which makes it possible to use the imagination to enter and appreciate other lives in other places (Lewis, 1961). It is the conscious use of this power of literature which will be explored in this paper.

Posacculturation: The Process

The power of literature to deepen understandings and appreciations of the self and others, its potential for positive acculturation--or, to use this writer's term, posacculturation--has several dimensions. Posacculturation can be therapeutic and heighten insights into, and solutions to, problems. This facet is sometimes referred to as "bibliotherapy." But posacculturation is much more. It is nurturant and develops meanings before the onslaught of conflict--with self, another, society, nature. It inspires values, attitudes, and knowledge which lead to positive changes in behavior. This is its more dynamic value.

The idea of positive acculturation through literature is not new. Aristotle wrote of the healing value of emotions aroused by reading. The library at Thebes, Greece, is inscribed "The Healing Place of the Soul;" the medieval Abbey of Saint Gall in Switzerland, "The Medicine Chest of the Soul." However, the first actual book describing this power of literature was not published until 1840--by an American, John Galt, M. D. Since that time many librarians and teachers, as well as physicians and psychologists, have drawn on literature "to promote the ability to find meaning in life.....to endow life in general with more meaning....." (Bettelheim, 1977).

The specific capacities of literature to acculturate positive understandings, values, and behaviors are many. Literature provides a means for approaching the complexities and realities of life. It deepens experience and provides a human connection to issues of the times and to other beings (Sadker, 1977). Vicarious participation in the lives of literary charac-

ters, especially when perceived as models, stimulates psychological processes which may lead to emotional and cathartic insights and more effective and humane coping behaviors. Conflicts may be resolved, values clarified, understandings developed, by analyzing the similar conflicts and resolutions of literary characters. Analyzing literature provides experience with the problem-solving process through identification. When confronted with a similar conflict situation, the reader then applies the insights gained, and capacities to change, read in the literature (Cianciolo, 1965).

The effectiveness of the process is directly related to the guidance of a knowledgable and sensitive facilitator--teacher, parent, or counselor. The facilitator's contemplative comments and questions can lead the reader to critically analyze and identify with the literary character. By analyzing the character's resolution of conflict those psychological processes which may lead to emotional and cathartic insights and more effective and humane behaviors and values are stimulated. The insights, values, behaviors, and knowledges inferred from the literature might then be applied to similar real life human dramas. Effective posacculturation also assumes the facilitator's thoughtful selection of appropriate literature, knowledge of human psychology, understanding of the individual reader, ability to critically and subtly analyze characters, and utilization of apropos timing.

Posacculturation: The Steps

With an adroit facilitator who can captivate the reader, the steps in the process of posacculturation can flow:

1. First, the values, concepts, or behaviors to be acculturated need to be identified. Observations, interviews, analyses of responses to open-ended questions or sentences, self-concept measures, group discussions, sociographic techniques, attitude surveys, values clarifications--can indicate the reader's needs and interests, as well as his level of receptivity.

2. Second, the appropriate literature to meet the reader's needs is selected. Books chosen for posacculturation must be truthful books written by sensitive authors who dare to confront controversial issues. These books must develop nonstereotyped characters and situations which represent varied ethnic and national groups. Each work should exemplify qualities of fine writing:

a. an original plot that is logically developed
b. representation of the broad spectrum of life
c. honest characterization without oversimplification
d. competent use of stylistically interesting language
e. content that reflects real concerns
f. presentation of a worthwhile theme
g. inclusion of humor as part of life (Tiedt, 1979).

It is important that posacculturative books be selected also "for the believeability of their content." Both characters and situations must be sufficiently real for the reader to identify with. The child from the ghetto, for example, may experience an inability to identify with the child from the prosperous middle class even though they share similar needs and conflicts (Sebesta and Iverson, 1975).

In addition, this literature must stimulate identification with a strong hero or heroine. Identification with the heroic persona can acculturate the reader to successful resolution of conflict, to deeper knowledge of himself, others, and the hu-

man experience, to humanistic values and beliefs (Bettelheim, 1977). Such identification enables the reader to lessen a personal sense of isolation and difference from others and to elevate self-esteem if the character is admired. It leads him to accept others, to satisfy needs, to confront fears, to increase understanding of human strengths and weaknesses. He can be left integrated, restored, his intrapsychic tensions healed (Lesser, 1962).

Care should be taken, however, that the moral dilemma be nonthreatening. The reader's ability to cope with the dilemma without experiencing depression is a vital consideration. The selection must be edifying without being moralistic or didactic. A dicactic book, written only to promulgate the author's beliefs, is dishonest. When the belief overpowers the characters and what they are doing, the book fails (Stewig, 1980).

3. Third, the literary work is communicated. The selection--prose, poetry, or drama--can be read orally to, or silently by, individual or group. The introduction of the literary work is brief. It includes an objective summary statement and brief comments on author, literary style, and genre. To avoid the reader's rejection of the work, the facilitator should circumvent equation of the heroic conflict with that of the reader at this point. Posacculturation, though planned thoughtfully, must remain open and tacit.

Where possible, the literature should be read aloud. In the warm intimate sharing and communication of oral reading and responsive listening between individual and individual, or individual and group, posacculturation takes place. Oral read-

ing elevates the communication process to a level more intimate than silent reading. When the young child is seated on the adult's lap, or snuggled beside him, and when the adolescent and reader are seated in "personal proxemic bubble," the intimacy of communication is even greater. Reader and listener, close in space, sharing a message, both identify with characters and their approaches to lending meaning to their universe. Robert O'Rourke writes:

> ".....every life must have meaning and purpose... ideals and values fire the will to responsible action...I choose stories with some principle to be admired or prized...I read, hoping that my students will understand the message of the story now or perhaps in the future, hoping also that the principle or idea may affect their behavior..." (O'Rourke, 1978).

4. Fourth, the reader crystalizes awareness of the character's approach to finding meaning, insight, and knowledge. With the facilitator, the reader explores the thoughts and emotions of the characters, expresses his own ideas and feelings, and clarifies values. Thus he internalizes the book's message and is better prepared to live that message.

Because reading can be a two-edged sword, cutting both ways, it is a matter of sober importance that the book be analyzed. Thoughtful questionning by the facilitator is vital to identification and internalization. As questions are explored, new associations are verbalized, new insights are evolved. The format is "open talk"--reading orally and discussing freely--guided by interpretive questions which elicit analyses of the literary work and personal values and ideas.

Watson would initiate the crystalization process by asking the reader's interpretation of the story and then proceeding

to apply the story to the reader's own life through interpretation questions. The reader is led to consider the relationships among the book's characters and to determine reasons for and effects of their behaviors. Only after the reader has viewed the character in all dimensions is he asked to apply the story's insights and solutions to his own life. Even then he determines the desirability and consequences of several alternatives to that application (Watson, 1975). As an alternative, Weissenberg suggests an informal reading conference in which the student retells the story, explores how one character must have felt, relates a similar personal incident, and discusses the consequences of certain attitudes and behaviors (Weissenberg, 1973). In any event, through questionning and discussion, the reader, "instead of harboring secret fears and feeling isolated and alone, begins to talk more openly" (Tartagni, 1974).

5. Fifth, the reader experiments with various creative expressions which involve him in reinforcing insights gained:

a. Creative Drama. The reader can play out a scene from a plot in which the hero or heroine exemplifies positive values, beliefs, and feelings, as the friendship scene in E. B. White's CHARLOTTE'S WEB. Or, the reader can creatively improvise alternatives to denouements of the conflict. For example, dialogue might be created extemporaneously to illustrate alternative reactions of their peers to the rejected Shibi in Yashima's CROW BOY or to the taunted Wanda in Estes' THE HUNDRED DRESSES. Dramatizing the hero's or heroine's interactions within the plot, or alternatives to less-than-heroic actions, the reader lives the positive values, attitudes, and behaviors to be acculturated.

b. Pantomime. The reader can express, without words, through kinesic action and gesture only, (1) situations, (2) moods, feelings, (3) characterizations, which occur within a book. Pantomiming Alexander's struggles in ALEXANDER AND THE TERRIBLE, HORRIBLE, NO GOOD, VERY BAD DAY, the reader discovers that a story can be told through kinesics alone. He also learns to better recognize and empathize with the physical expressions of human emotions and to better understand the character expressing those emotions.

c. Role Play. McCaslin tells us that "role playing may be considered preventative in that it provides an opportunity for all children in a group to develop sensitivity toward the feelings of others, and encourages changes of attitude through understanding" (McCaslin, 1968). Role play creates a way for children to "get into another's shoes and gain greater understanding and tolerance for how other people feel in different situations. Blume's BLUBBER or Hinton's OUTSIDERS could initiate role plays involving cliques and how "in groups" and "out groups" feel. Zindel's THE PIGMAN generates material for role-playing family or peer situations involving sex role stereotyping. Fox's THE SLAVE DANCER or Colliers' MY BROTHER SAM IS DEAD can stimulate roleplays that provide understanding for human emotion and suffering involved in various historical incidents.

d. Puppetry. A total communications art, puppetry provides the player a freedom which cannot be achieved when acting a part. Dramatizing the hero's or heroine's interactions with other characters enables the reader to live the values, beliefs, decisions, dilemmas, and behaviors to be acculturated. For ex-

ample, in creating the dialogues, oral-kinesic interpretations, and characters for Haugaard's THE LITTLE FISHES, the reader lives Guido's philosophy; for Hinton's THE OUTSIDERS, better empathizes with the struggles of Ponyboy and all other ethnics outside the main culture. Hans Schmidt expresses puppetry's values: "The spontaneous reactions springing from the dynamics of puppetry can be used creatively to motivate children to read, discuss, enact, create, and enjoy literature" (Schmidt, 1975).

e. Creative Writing. Rewriting an ending or scene of a story, or transposing a story from prose to drama, helps the reader to note relationships and draw comparisons and analogies. The reader might rewrite the transformati on scene in Steig's SYLVESTER AND THE MAGIC PEBBLE, or the ending of Politi's THE SONG OF THE SWALLOWS. He might transpose Merrill's satiric THE PUSHCART WAR to full puppet drama. Or he might write his own version of the extended metaphor line poem in Schulz' HAPPINESS IS A WARM PUPPY (or love is...red is...).

Posacculturation: The Literature

An impressive body of literature reflects life, develops respect for humanity, and motivates full exploration of human potential. This literature revolves around three major themes: (1) becoming of self, (2) developing positive human relationships, and (3) coping with the dynamic, changing world. Through identification with this literature posacculturation occurs.

Becoming of self

Many distinguished authors have written perceptively about the human need to become and about the human feelings--of

security, belonging, adequacy, acceptance, love, self-realization, and integrity--essential to becoming.

One of these writers, Paul Zindel, explores adolescent becoming in THE PIGMAN, a story of universal alienation and loneliness. Adolescents can identify with the protagonists of THE PIGMAN, John and Lorraine, as they search for greater self-knowledge. Unable to communicate with unfeeling parents, John and Lorraine befriend lonely, eccentric Angelo Pignati. He offers them the sympathy and understanding absent from their own homes. They bring him a joy he had not experienced since his wife's death.

When the Pigman suffers a heart attack and is hospitalized, he urges his surrogate children to continue visiting his house. Impulsively, they stage a wild party. He returns, unexpectedly, to mayhem, his precious china pig collection shattered, his house desecrated, his friendship betrayed. When he discovers that Bobo, the baboon he religiously visits at the zoo, has died, the disillusioned old man can cope with no more betrayal or loneliness and succombs to a stroke. Shocked too late into reality, John and Lorraine realize the enormity of their irresponsibility and attempt to assuage their sorrow and guilt by writing a book, a memorial epic to their friend. In the final chapter they reveal their tragic becoming:

> "We had trespassed...been where we didn't belong, and we were being punished for it. Mr. Pignati had paid with his life. But when he died something in us had died as well...There was no one else to blame anymore. No Bores or Old Ladies or Nortons, or Assassins waiting at the bridge...And there was no place to hide--no place across any river for a boatman to take us...Our life would be what we made of it--nothing more, nothing less."

Becoming underlies the themes in other Zindel novels.

MY DARLING, MY HAMBURGER explores teenage pregnancy and abortion. PARTON ME, YOU'RE STEPPING ON MY EYEBALL! tells of the need for family, and of family disintegration. THE EFFECT OF GAMMA RAYS ON MAN IN THE MOON MARIGOLDS focuses on the search for love; I NEVER LOVED YOUR MIND, on the quest for self. The same bitter-sweet meeting of comedy and tragedy, wit and dynamism, love and sensitivity, that epitomizes his writing for adolscents provides positive acculturation for young children in his picture book, I LOVE MY MOTHER, a universal celebration of the love of child for parent. In describing his parent, the child protagonist reveals their open, warm, loving relationship and his own level of becoming: "She has a nice nose and taught me judo...she tells me secrets like she's lonely."

One of the most pervasive conflicts within the Self--the philosophical question, What is Real, Good, True, and Beautiful?is also one of the most pervasive themes of those books which lead readers to becoming. Perhaps the Skin Horse in Bianco's THE VELVETEEN RABBIT said it best. Wise sage and gentle friend, he mentors the rabbit's attempts to clarify feelings and values toward the confusing social milieu of the nursery and the arrogant discrimination of its self-appointed pacesetters, the "mechanical toys":

> "What is REAL? asked the Rabbit one day. "Does it mean having things buzz inside you and a stick-out handle?" "Real isn't how you are made," said the Skin Horse. "It's a thing that happens to you. When a child loves you for a long, long time, not just to play with, but REALLY loves you, then you become real. It doesn't happen all at once. You become. It takes a long time. Generally, by the time you are Real, most of your hair has been loved off, and your eyes drop out and you get loose in the joints and very shabby. But these things don't

> matter at all, because once you are Real you can't be ugly, except to people who don't understand."

Readers can identify with the Rabbit as he rejects the false values of the class conscious mechanical toys, loves and is loved by the Boy, and achieves one level of becoming. When the Rabbit's serenity is disturbed by the live rabbits who taunt his sawdust body and immobile legs, he longs to be like them. It isn't until he sacrifices his sawdust "beauty" and transcends to a loftier level of Real that he achieves full becoming, again leading the reader to empathize with the message of the Skin Horse.

In THE LITTLE PRINCE by Saint Exupery, the reader discovers once more that one becomes when one finds the meaning of inner values. The Little Prince, like the Velveteen Rabbit, is searching for life's meaning, for answers to the philosophical question. He leaves his tiny planet, and the rose whose expectations have disoriented him, and travels from planet to planet questing. Sadly disappointed with the values of their single inhabitants, he continues to planet Earth. Here he meets the Pilot and the Fox, who demonstrate in many ways what is really important--the rites, rituals, and taming of life. The fox summarizes his advice:

> "...and now here is my secret, a very simple secret; It is only with the heart that one can see rightly; what is essential is invisible to the eye...It is the time you have wasted for your rose that makes your rose so important...Men have forgotten this truth...But you must not forget it...You become responsible, forever, for what you have tamed...You are responsible for your rose..."

For those whose becoming is highly individualistic, Picard's ONE IS ONE will inspire identification. Evolved from the folk tune, "One is one and all alone and evermore shall be

so," this book reveals the destiny of Stephen de Beauville. Branded too cowardly for knighthood, Stephen, like many misfits of Medieval society, is sent to a monastery. There he becomes an accomplished painter. But, scorned and unrecognized, he flees to seek knighthood. Found, by chance, half-starved, by wise Sir Pagan Latourelle, who takes him on as squire, Stephen learns the arts of knighthood. Sir Pagan is the first to ever accept Stephen just as he is. In a vain attempt to save the king, Sir Pagan is captured. Just before his grim execution, Stephen secretly visits him and receives the advice that will guide his life philosophy:

> "...above all, always be yourself. Do not be afraid to do what you want to do, as long as it hurts no one else. We are each of us as God made us, and if God has seen fit to make you in an uncommon mould, be brave enough to be different. Promise me that, Stephen."

Something dies within Stephen when Pagan's head is raised above the crowd. But time heals anguish and pain. Stephen wins knighthood and the devotion of an ebullient young squire. When Thomas succombs to the plague, Stephen, remembering Pagan's words, returns to the solace of his painting at the monastery. His sorrow could have been avoided had he never run away, but he had found happiness, two friends to love, and himself. Those who, like Stephen and Pagan, doubt the wisdom of achieving becoming through mass social conformity will find inspiration in ONE IS ONE. They also will discover an authentic historical account of the less nostalgic elements of Medieval life, elements which unite people of all times and places in their striving.

Many other books, from humor to tragedy, develop the

themes within becoming, some with superrealism, some philosophically. One of these, Armstrong's powerfully written SOUNDER, is a realistic tragedy of an alienated black sharecropper who steals food for his hungry family and is imprisoned, the boy who searches constantly for his father, the mother whose strength fortifies her son, the maimed dog whose life and death parallel that of the master, and a teacher who gives the boy a new life of books and creativity. Bach's JONATHON LIVINGSTON SEAGULL, similarly, inculcates readers with the values of becoming to full potential against heavy opposition. Jonathon refuses the traditional role of the gull as scavenger. Though he is ostracized for his individualism and nonconformity, he transcends and becomes.

DeAngeli's THE DOOR IN THE WALL tells of Robin's dispair over his twisted limbs, crippled by the Plague which devastates fourteenth century England. Brother Luke plucks him from death, nurses him to health, and advises: "Always remember that Thou hast only to follow the wall far enough and there will be a door in it." Robin never regains his former physical perfection, but is knighted for swimming the moat and seeking military aid to save the beseiged town.

David, of Holm's NORTH TO FREEDOM, a prisoner of war in a World War II concentration camp, is given a chance to escape and is told only to make his way to Denmark. Distrusting all humanity, he wends cautiously from Eastern Europe. Enroute he regains his faith in the helpfulness, love, and goodness of humanity.

Stripe, of Paulus' HOPE FOR THE FLOWERS, discovers that the millions of fellow caterpillars climbing irrationally one

over the other to get to the tops of thousands of "cater" pillars are displaced by the new climbers and dashed to the ground, broken. He begins his long descent to the ground, spreading his new philosophy: to get to the "top" one must "become" (a butterfly) and fly, not climb over one's fellows.

Sometimes books which acculturate becoming do so through protagonists who do not become. Kin Platt's Roger, THE BOY WHO COULD MAKE HIMSELF DISAPPEAR, does not become, but slowly loses his last thread of integration and withdraws into a schizophrenic world, unloved and unwanted. The protagonist of Knowles' A SEPARATE PEACE searches painfully, with his close friend, for a sense of integration and values. Engaged in the struggle to find himself, he mistakes his fellow man as his enemy. Tragically, he destroys his friend, the mistaken enemy, and discovers too late that he is his own worst enemy.

Although most writers approach the themes withim becoming with gravity, Judith Viorst develops the same themes with levity and wit. Viorst's characters have difficulty coping with peers, sibling rivalry, jealousies, disappointments, and extended imaginations. In I'LL FIX ANTHONY, Alexander responds to the meanness and rejection of his older brother by dreaming of the day when he will take his revenge. Even though Alexander's family is warm and loving there are times when nothing seems right, as Viorst illustrates in ALEXANDER AND THE TERRIBLE, HORRIBLE, NO GOOD, VERY BAD DAY. Alexander's day steadily deteriorates from his waking with gum in his hair to having to wear his railroad train pajamas to bed: he hates them! Anyone who has experienced a bad day will empathize with Alexander's frustrations. The awk-

ward moments, the self-doubts on the way to adulthood provide the humor of the book and escape valves for readers who fall short of adult expectations and their own expectations as well.

Developing positive human relationships

The importance of meaningful human relationships dominates the three themes within a second impressive body of pos-acculturative literature: (1) needs for acceptance, appreciation, and esteem by family, peer, and societal groups, (2) understanding and appreciation of ethnic, racial, social, and age groups different from one's own, (3) isolation and rejection by, and conflicting values with, other individuals and groups.

Exemplary of the first of these three themes, E. B. White's CHARLOTTE'S WEB conveys mature humanistic concepts of friendship, acceptance, loneliness, death, and tolerance of those with different lifestyles. Wilbur, the runt pig, is rescued from inevitable doom when Fern interferes with the natural scheme of things for all runts. She nurtures Wilbur to such corpulent prosperity that "a conspiracy, a plot" develops to turn him into smoked ham and bacon at Christmastime.

Charlotte A Cavatica, the spider, a smart, persevering, and loyal friend, one of the outstanding of children's literature's few heroines, saves him this time. Playing on human gullibility, Charlotte weaves words in her webs which convince the farmers that Wilbur is "...some pig...terrific...radiant...humble..." They conclude that he is indispensable. Wilbur later questions her: "Why did you do all this for me?...I don't deserve it... I've never done anything for you." Charlotte's reply expresses

the values her character has been acculturating throughout the book:

> "You have been my friend...That in itself is a tremendous thing. I wove my webs for you because I liked you. After all, what's a life anyway? We're born, we live a little while, we die. A spider's life can't help being something of a mess, with all this trapping and eating flies. By helping you, perhaps I was trying to lift up my life a trifle; Heaven knows anyone's life can stand a little of that."

Under Charlotte's tutelage, Wilbur evolves from the lamenter who cries, "I'm less than two months old and I'm tired of living," to revulsion at Charlotte's "brutal, bloodthirsty" flycatching, to assuming responsibility for returning her egg sac, her "magnus opus," to the barn after her lonely death at the fair. When three of her babies elect to remain with him in her beloved barn, Wilbur reveals the humanistic concern Charlotte has acculturated within him:

> "Welcome to the barn cellar. You have chosen a hallowed doorway from which to string your webs. I think it is only fair to tell you that I was devoted to your mother. I owe my life to her. She was brilliant, beautiful, and loyal to the end. I shall always treasure her memory. To you, her daughters, I pledge my friendship, forever and ever."

Through identification with Wilbur and Charlotte, the reader learns more of living and loving life, growing and becoming, confronting death, surviving, and the quality of happiness when surviving is not a certainty.

In Yashima's CROW BOY not only is the theme of understanding self and others explored, but also that of appreciating ethnicity. To understand CROW BOY is to understand the problems which ethnic children experience with assimilation into the main

culture--prejudice, loss if identity, sacrifice, aloneness, alienation. Like all of Yashima's books about Japanese culture, CROW BOY'S messages are universal to all ethnic and social groups.

Crow Boy is a small, quiet child who walks to school alone, sits by himself, does not talk to the other children, and often withdraws into an isolated world of daydreaming and nature-watching. The children ridicule and taunt him, calling him Chibi (tiny one). No one probes beneath the surface of his different clothes, mannerisms, and interests. Not until the final year of school does the rejected Crow Boy gain appreciation and his name by his perfect imitation of crow calls and his extensive knowledge of nature. Mr. Isobe, Crow Boy's sensitive and understanding teacher, reveals to all at the final school program that Crow Boy has learned the crow calls on his trips to and from school, a long daily journey on which he leaves at dawn and does not return home until long after sunset. Even though Crow Boy never does really become part of the group, the children regret their callous behavior and begin greeting him when he enters town.

Another child of different culture, lifestyle, and socio-economic position is described in Estes' poignant THE HUNDRED DRESSES. Ostracized and ridiculed merely because she wears the same faded dress to school every day, Wanda Petronski seeks acceptance through long fantasy descriptions of the one hundred dresses hanging in her closet at home. When the poor Polish girl is challenged, the real conflict ensues. Eventually Wanda and her family move away, and the other girls then discover Wanda's dresses, one hundred fine drawings. The children discover their cruelty too late, but write to Wanda, and she graciously responds.

Also poor, Maddie feels especially sad because she knows she could have befriended Wanda but did not. Wanda's needs for acceptance and her compensatory behaviors will inspire compassion and understanding in the reader with little experience with society's diverse cultural groups.

Esteem for others who might be different from the reader can be enhanced through many other fine books. The vignettes presented in Simon's WHY AM I DIFFERENT? encourage the reader to feel that being different is perfectly acceptable and that each individual is "special." Differences in physical makeup, personality, and culture are presented to give readers an understanding and appreciation of others and to help them cope with their difficulties in developing their own self-images and respect. That different family styles also are supportive, growing, and loving is seen in Simon's ALL KINDS OF FAMILIES. Nuclear, traditional, adoptive, multicultural, and divorced households are described and illustrated through natural events of family living: weddings, holidays, family visits, deaths, human failures, breeches of love. Depicting a one-parent home with love and a perceptive statement is Zolotow's A FATHER LIKE THAT. A fatherless boy expresses his feelings to his mother, painting a wistful portrait of the father he longs for. The boy's mother continues to sew very rapidly as her son talks. When he finishes she tells him that just in case such a father never comes, he can grow up to be a father like that someday.

That such esteem, love, and admiration for others evolve from inner, rather than materialistic, values is seen in Reyher's version of a Russian folktale, MY MOTHER IS THE MOST BEAUTIFUL

WOMAN IN THE WORLD. A universal tale, it defines the real love between two people whatever the relationship. In this story a little girl and her mother and father are separated as they work together one day in the fields. To find her mother, Varya tells people that she is looking for the most beautiful woman in the world. When her mother is found the humble woman expresses the story's theme: "We do not love people because they are beautiful, but they seem beautiful to us because we love them."

Through a rare picture book portrayal of a figure who is essentially indifferent, uncaring, unloving the reader's awareness of the universality of the need for appreciation and esteem is piqued. In Heide's THE SHRINKING OF TREEHORN, the protagonist is dismayed to discover that he has begun shrinking. He attempts to focus his mother's sympathies on his problem but she continues looking into the oven: "That's too bad, dear...I do hope this cake isn't going to fall..." During dinner, when he again mentions that he is shrinking, his mother comments: "If you want to pretend you're shrinking, that's all right, as long as you don't do it at the table."

In school teacher response is also superficial and inappropriate: "Well, I'll let it go for today...but see that it's taken care of before tomorrow...we don't shrink in class." Treehorn manages to cease shrinking and returns to normal size. But as the book ends he is confronted with a new problem: his skin is turning green. He muses silently: "I don't think I'll tell anyone...If I don't say anything, they won't notice."

A number of other distinguished books acculturate knowledge and appreciation of self and others. The nonconforming

individualist of boundless energy and curiousity is rewarded in Caudill's DID YOU CARRY THE FLAG TODAY, CHARLEY? For his good behavior, Charley is given the honor of carrying the flag for his peers in their small Appalachian school. Zolotow's WILLIAM'S DOLL reveals how William's understanding grandmother finally buys him a doll because "some day he will be a father, too." Fitzhugh's HARRIETT THE SPY is ostracized for the notes criticizing others she has been writing in her author's notebook. When she evaluates her friendships, she develops insights into the feelings and needs of herself and others.

In Ets' PLAY WITH ME the animals run away when the girl tries to catch them, but emerge one by one when she sits quietly by the brook. Searching for her lost mentally retarded little brother leads Sara to understand herself and others a little better in Byars' SUMMER OF THE SWANS. The life and values of the Tewa Pueblo Indians in New Mexico are described perceptively in Clark's IN MY MOTHER'S HOUSE. And finally, as the thieving grocer's assistant in Malamud's THE ASSISTANT, Frank Alpine searches for "better control over himself."

Many notable authors have contributed fine books which make it possible for readers to identify with different ethnic, racial, and social-economic groups--in our own country and around the world. When children do not have opportunities for group identification through other areas of living, literature may give them feelings of belonging and group identification that they can hold onto (Lonsdale, 1973). However, learning to accept and respect the diverse cultures in our pluralistic world goes beyond mere acknowledgment of differences to knowledge, sensitivity,

and empathy of the hearts and minds of those who are different (Reid, 1972). Literature can be "the door in the wall" through which children can meet, know, and empathize with people everywhere (Lonsdale, 1973).

Leo Politi inspires such empathy and appreciation through his beautifully and authentically illustrated books which depict the Mexican-Americans in California. His SONG OF THE SWALLOWS tells of the mystery that surrounds the annual return of the swallows to San Juan Capistrano Mission, one of twenty-one missions founded by Father Junipero Serra along California's El Camino Real, and of the deep friendship between the little boy Juan and the bell-ringer Julian. In JUANITA the protagonist receives a rose-colored dress from her mother and a white dove from her father on her fifth birthday. She carries the dove in the Blessing of the Animals procession which winds through Olvera Street on the Saturday before Easter.

PEDRO, THE LITTLE ANGEL OF OLVERA STREET, is a tribute to the oldest street in Los Angeles, restored to preserve the flavor of early Spanish days. Pedro portrays an angel in a Mexican Christmas procession on the street. Similarly, A BOAT FOR PEPPE describes the warmth and charm of the Sicilian section of Monterey, California. And Chanking Street, the Chinese section of Los Angeles, is depicted in MOY MOY.

Writing in black dialect, John Steptoe encourages readers to identify and empathize with black children growing up in the warm but challenging inner city. His dramatic and perceptive portrayals include STEVIE, who is cared for by Robert's mother while his own mother works. Robert resents Stevie's immaturity

but misses the little boy's positive qualities when Stevie's family moves. BIRTHDAY is a loving family celebration for Javaka, the firstborn of the community. The entirety of UPTOWN is a conversation between John and Dennis about junkies, black pride, clothing, the army, karate, hippies, and what they will be when they grow up. And in TRAIN RIDE a group of children take a forbidden train ride uptown from their homes in Brooklyn to Times Square.

Not all realistic literature about ethnic groups is so positive and supportive. Much is naturalistic, superrealistic. Modern writers are increasingly depicting the tragic conflict brought on by cultural and ethnic differences, misunderstandings, and insensitivities. There is the hope that such confrontation will effect empathy and change.

THE OUTSIDERS by Susan Hinton epitomizes this conflict and provides insight into the lives and feelings of the Pony Boys of the world, who know what it is like to exist outside of the mainstream:

> "It ain't fair!" I cried passionately. It ain't fair that we have all the rough breaks!" I didn't know exactly what I meant, but I was thinking about ...Sodapop...a dropout so he could get a job and keep me in school; and Darry, getting old before his time trying to run a family and hang on to two jobs and never having any fun--while the Socs had so much spare time and money that they jumped us and each other for kicks, and beer blasts and river-bottom parties because they didn't know what else to do. Things were rough all over, all right. All over the East Side. It just didn't seem right to me."

Pony Boy Curtis and his brothers Soda and Darry, orphans, survive in constant warfare with the westside rich kids, the Socs. They are bewildered and resentful at being excluded from the Amer-

ican Dream of affluence and opportunity, at being labelled "greasers" by the wealthy and contemptuous Socs. The hatred that simmers between the two gangs erupts frequently in violence, and in one deadly fight, Pony Boy's friend kills one of the Socs. The two flee, but eventually give themselves up. They stop to rescue some small children from a fire, and Pony Boy's friend dies from injuries and burns. Through this encounter with death, Pony Boy grows in compassion and learns that, although no advantages have been handed to him, he can help himself and others.

Another powerful story, NILDA by Nicholasa Mohr, relates the hardships of being Puerto Rican and poor and of the barriers facing women. These hardships are epitomized in the degrading visit of a welfare worker to the Ramiriz home. Prying into the private lives of Nilda's family, she finally directs her hostility at Nilda: "Let me see your hands!...Wake up, young lady...Let me see your hands...You have filthy nails...Look at that, Mrs. Ramiriz...She's how old?...Ten years old?...Filthy...How often do you bathe?" Graphic accounts of police prejudice against Puerto Ricans, Puerto Rican prejudice against blacks, spiritualism, superstition, anti-Catholicism, and strong antiestablishment themes provide a poignant statement about the Puerto Rican experience in America.

A book with universal meaning for all ethnic groups focuses on the beggar children in Naples, Italy, after World War II. Haugaard's THE LITTLE FISHES eloquently relates the eternal truth of the need for humans to develop and live by an ethical code that involves responsibility to one's self and love and understanding of others. After his mother's death, Guido, one of the displaced children left to wander in the bombed city of Naples

in 1943, attempts to apply her advice: the two worthwhile things one needs in life are love and strength. He proves that he has both.

Guido becomes the total support of fellow refugees Anna and her small brother Mario, and with them joins the refugee lines moving toward Casino. They live in and out of caves, never free from danger and starvation. In spite of his harsh life, Guido explains that in human relationships he finally accepts people as they are. When Anna asks him why he doesn't hate those who have invaded and destroyed their country, Guido replies: "It is understanding that makes the difference between us and animals and when you understand, you can feel a kind of happiness in the worst misery."

A number of internationally acclaimed writers have focused on the struggles and conflicts of unique groups to achieve empathy, appreciation, and understanding against the obstacles imposed by the dominant culture. Potok's THE CHOSEN depicts two young Jewish boys, sons of a Hasidic rabbi and an Orthodox rabbi, and how they contend with life's passages. Malamud's THE FIXER tells of a simple Russian peasant of Jewish descent who is wrongly accused and convicted of murder in tsarist Russia during a period of violent antisemitism. Camus' THE STRANGER is a French novel about a man living an ordinary life until he commits a senseless murder. Hesse's SIDDHARTHA portrays a soul-searcher who meets the Buddha and undertakes his search for the ultimate good.

Coping with the dynamic, changing world

Another large group of books focuses on the human need

to learn how to deal constructively with a dynamic, changing world. Everyone eventually confronts personal, social, economic, and political change. Books that dramatically illustrate the reality of change have the power of helping humankind understand that life is not static, that it is changing, and must be coped with, adjusted to, and influenced.

One of these books, Hunt's ACROSS FIVE APRILS, illustrates the role of war in the changing universe. The hopelessness and absurdity of conflict is seen in the tragedies of the Civil War--the five Aprils of the title, 1861-1865--on the Creighton family and their Southern Illinois neighbors. Jethro, the youngest Creighton, narrates the story as he observes his parents age and their sons divide in sympathy for either North or South. When his brothers enlist in Union and Confederate armies and his father beomes ill, Jethro becomes head of family. He develops much self-knowledge as he assumes responsibility both for the farm work and for coping with local reaction to a family with sons fighting on opposing sides. Even the happiness that greets the war's end is tempered by Lincoln's tragic assassination and the uncertainties of postwar reconstruction.

The themes of Colliers' MY BROTHER SAM IS DEAD also focus on the changes in human lives wrought by war's hopelessness and absurdity. Set during the American Revolution, it reveals the conflict between sixteen-year-old Sam, who is anxious to join forces with the rebel cause, and his father, who has antipathy to all wars and forbids Sam to leave:

> "Oh, God, Sam, fight? Is it worth war to save a few pence in taxes?" "It's not the money, it's the principle." "Principle, Sam? You may know principle, Sam, but I know war. Have you ever seen a dear friend lying in the grass with the top of his skull off and

> his brains sliding out of them like wet oats? Have you ever heard a man shriek when he felt a bayonnet go through the middle of his back? I have, Sam, I have. It was at Louisberg the year before you were born. Oh, it was a great victory. They celebrated it with bonfires all over the colonies. And I carried my best friend's body back to his mother--sewed up in a sack. Do you want to come home that way?"

In spite of the opposition, Sam steals his father's gun and joins the fight. During the course of the war there are atrocities commited on both sides. Sam's father is killed, and Sam is senselessly hanged by his own side on false charges of thievery. The concluding line generates some provocotive ideas about war: "But somehow, even fifty years later, I keep thinking that there might have been another way, beside war, to achieve the same end."

To develop readers' understanding of resultant changes in themselves because of war at another level, critical analyses of the processes of gang scapegoating and victimization in books such as Blume's BLUBBER may prove invaluable. Such analyses may illustrate how wars begin so that we can better know how peace can be effected. BLUBBER portrays the traumatic effect that potential violence, either psychological or physical, can have on children. The victimization of Linda, the chubbiest girl in the fifth grade, is related by classmate Jill Brenner. Under the leadership of popular Wendy, a clique has merged whose primary intent is to torment Linda. The group creates distasteful tortures. The clique forces Linda to repeat, "I am Blubber, the smelly whale of class 206," before she can use the toilet, eat lunch, or get on the bus. Eventually she repeats it without any coercian.

When Jill, who has participated in these tortures, fi-

nally takes a stand against them, she encounters direct conflict with Wendy, the clique's leader. Then she discovers how easy it is to slip from the "inside" to the "outside" as she herself becomes the victim.

The young child coping with change is depicted by Keats in PETER'S CHAIR. Unhappy that his furniture is being painted pink for his new baby sister, Peter runs away with his chair, his dog, his toy crocodile, and a picture of himself when he was a baby. He settles in front of the house, discovers his chair is too small, and ends up helping his father to paint it.

Another aspect of change is explored through Sam Gribley's return to less turbulent times and a less complex society in George's MY SIDE OF THE MOUNTAIN. Sam feels smothered by the city and his large family. He escapes to the Catskills and lives as his ancesters did in the wilderness.

John Steinbeck writes eloquently of change. His GRAPES OF WRATH depicts the Oklahoma sharecroppers who pack their few belongings onto a decrepit truck and migrate from the dust bowl to California, where, as migratory workers, they experience the deepest deprivation and rejection.

Posacculturation: The Influence

Although the degree to which readers are affected by literature has not been fully measured, several studies confirm that they are influenced. In Fehl's study, "The Influence of Reading on Adolescents," students were asked to report changes in their concepts, attitudes, and behaviors that they concluded were a result of reading. Four hundred twenty high school students in two public high schools in Tuscon were involved. A

content analysis made of the responses to a questionnaire showed the areas in which students were influenced to be: self-image, philosophy of life, cultural groups, social problems, and human sensitivity (Fehl, 1968).

Another study reported related findings. Brooks concluded that developmental values depicted in books serve as catalysts for change in readers' behaviors, thinking, and feelings, even though those changes are not dramatic (Brooks, 1950).

The Berg-Cross', similarly, found that listening to stories changed children's attitudes. These researchers used four well-known children's books with one hundred twenty students to determine how responses to questions differed before and after listening to the books. These four-and-six-year-olds changed more than one-half of their answers (Berg-Cross, 1968).

In his study, however, Loban found that stories read aloud to adolescents must necessarily be followed by discussion techniques if the students were to achieve the insights in social sensitivity that the study intended (Loban, 1954). A study conducted by Biskin and Hoskinson supported his findings. These researchers ascertained that literature affects children's moral development when analytical and critical discussion is involved. In their study, fourth and fifth grade students read seven stories and participated in structured discussion lessons. The students' moral maturity scores (Kohlberg's procedures) were determined before and after the lessons. There was a significant difference between the mean scores of the control and experimental groups. Discussions of moral dilemmas induced changes in moral judgments (Biskin and Hoskinson, 1977).

Finally, Aaron and Muench concluded that systematic instruction in reading and analyzing literature helped experimental subjects to develop an "intellectual and emotional understanding of story characters' state of mind" and thus to enhance self-concept and values. These researchers found that a taxonomic approach which moves from cognitive to affective dimensions increases adolescents' competence at making value judgments, relating perceptions of literary characters to their own self-concepts, and identifying adults who show more socially acceptable forms of behavior (Aaron and Muench, 1975).

Presenting another side of the issue, Russell and Shrodes argue that it is uncertain that a specific literary work will influence any particular reader, or that the influence will occur in the desired direction. Tensions and anxieties may block or distort constructive ideas. A character who is a strong reminder of a negatively esteemed self may be rejected or disliked. Valid identification may be missed altogether because of a self-concept that is too vague. A character who is dissimilar socially and economically may be ignored even though his conflicts are similar to the reader's (Russell and Shrodes, 1950).

In addition, Zaccaria and Moses caution that readers may tend to rationalize or intellectualize situations, to raise defenses. There may be the tendency to assume that merely reading a work of literature will solve problems. Insight gained through reading may not be accompanied by actual working through because of the absence of the coping behavior required for change. Too, it is possible that fears and anxieties may be reinforced by reading about conflict (Zaccaria and Moses, 1968).

It is important that the facilitator give careful consideration to these cautions throughout the development of a literary work with the reader. Through skillful use of the process of posacculturation, the facilitator can lead the reader to deeper insights, understandings, and appreciations of each of the problems mentioned in the cautions.

Posacculturation: The Bibliographies

A number of excellent annotated bibliographies, organized by subject, are available to help the facilitator select appropriate books for posacculturation. Toys n' Things Press has prepared an extensive annotated listing in fifty categories for young children. Another important listing is BEHAVIOR PATTERNS IN CHILDREN'S BOOKS. This volume arranges over five hundred books within twenty-four categories and cross-indexes them under one hundred forty-six behavior patterns (Kircher, 1966). Other briefer listings include "Children Face Themselves through Books," "Books for Young Disabled Readers," and "Facilitating Human Development through Reading" (Homze, 1964; Altemus, 1973; Zaccaria and Moses, 1968).

One of the most comprehensive bibliographies, arranged according to behavioral patterns, is included in READING LADDERS FOR HUMAN RELATIONSHIPS. Dividing books into four "ladders"--creating a positive self-image, living with others, appreciating different cultures, and coping with changes--this bibliography lists four or five sub-headings within each category, further subdividing the ladders into four reading levels, from primary to adulthood (Reid, 1972). Accompanying this volume is LITERATURE FOR HUMAN UNDERSTANDING. A compendium of bibliographical essays,

this book outlines some approaches to developing positive concepts through literature (Taba, 1948).

Many excellent books with the power to acculturate positively have not been included in the bibliographies just described. Facilitators who wish to evaluate literary selections for posacculturation may find the following guidelines beneficial. Books which positively acculturate will:

1. develop positive and constructive values, thoughts, and behaviors about the self and others.

2. encourage free discussion and stimulate dialogue on previously avoided disturbing issues.

3. reveal through identification and compensation that others have struggled with similar life-situations.

4. enlarge spheres of interest and social sensitivities beyond the self.

5. deepen insights into the psychology and physiology of human behavior, attitudes, values.

6. enhance love of the arts, literature, reading, creative expression.

7. reveal other alternative methods for coping with life equitably.

8. increase effective interpersonal communication.

9. refine ability to cope with feelings and intuitive expression.

10. approach various ethnic groups realistically and sympathetically (Tiedt, 1979; Cianciolo, 1965; Rongione, 1972; Hoagland, 1972).

Clearly, posacculturation is not a panacea. It is,

however, a dynamic process with potential to enhance becoming in every discipline. It can, through literary experiences, lead the reader to greater self-awareness and -knowledge and to more humanistic values and behaviors.

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